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JUNE II

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH LONG-TERM ANARCHIST PRISONERS

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with whatever weapons at hand

revolt in the broadest sense, towards both sustaining our comrades and overturning the world that imprisons them. It's easy to make a contribution on a variety of levels, whether via a benefit show or an action, but its also always possible to approach the challenge of solidarity in a new way. This creativity is essential to building new paths towards the liberation of anarchist prisoners—and everyone else.

"At the same time, June 11th is a day of war. It's a day of rebellion because law and order may rule but they do not reign.

"The existence of anarchist prisoners reminds us of the existence of the anarchist war. A war that sometimes burns slowly and sometimes blinds the heavens with its fires."

-Christos Tsakalos, anarchist prisoner in Greece

On the basis of these aspirations, the meeting proposed a reinvigorated June 11 day of solidarity, deriving encouragement from Luers's example and the innovations his support crew had developed over his nearly decade-long imprisonment. In recent years, Luers has distanced himself from the proposal for anarchist solidarity, but he remains an important point of reference. His public statement in 2011 was profoundly inspiring:

"This June 11th marks the first international day of Solidarity with Eric McDavid, Marie Mason,2 and all our long-term anarchist political prisoners. We are here to honor them, support them, remind them that they are not forgotten, and most importantly to demand their release.

"June 11th is a reminder to us that though we spend our days outside of a prison many of our friends and allies spend theirs behind bars having sacrificed what little freedom they had to fight for something greater than themselves. We have a responsibility to them and to ourselves to struggle and fight until all are free."

As the June 11 statement in 2015 asserted, the struggle "assumes new forms" over time. The renewed solidarity day is now in its sixth year. Eric won his release in early 2015 through the legal research and efforts of his close supporters as well his own determination, against the backdrop of the solidarity and tension developed each June 11. At the same time, the solidarity extended by hundreds of actions and benefits around the world worked to organically transform June 11 into an international project that encompasses support for imprisoned comrades around the world. As a simple step towards maintaining this expansive approach, the assembly that has come together around the day produces a new call each year, aiming to suggest new connections or directions, with reference to ongoing revolts and transformations in anarchist struggle. Some prisoners choose to add to these calls with their own words, detailing experiences and ideas that add to the debate—see, for example, Marius Mason's June 2015 statement.

Autonomous initiatives also shape the development of the June 11 project. For example, the Fight Toxic Prisons convergence, now in its second year, draws connections between environmental organizing against pollution and ongoing struggles by prisoners and others against confinement.

The contributions of countless comrades around the world, imprisoned or not, have taken many forms—including written analyses and messages, benefit events, info-nights, demonstrations, actions, attacks, and bake sales. These do not simply accumulate quantitatively, but are also contributions to the evolution of anarchist

THE LANDSCAPE TRANSFORMS

Spring is unfolding, and the time has again come to look towards June 11th, the International Day of Solidarity with Marius Mason and Long-term Anarchist prisoners. While our celebration of this day is to lend attention to Marius and other anarchist prisoners at risk of being forgotten because of their long sentences, we're also continually thinking about how to emphasize how integral prisoners are, and an anti-prison struggle as a whole is, on our path towards freedom.

The site of prison has long held a rebellious and revolutionary potential. Prison is a place for rebels to encounter one another, learn together and organize among themselves. The historical legacy of revolt inside means that the prison of today is even better equipped to manage, isolate and repress rupture. Yet prison, like everything else, is not totalizing in its ability to control or stifle. Despite repression, despite the stultifying effects of things like drugs and institutional violence, prisoners continue to innovate and adapt and those of us on the outside can continue to do the same, in our relationships of solidarity and in our moves toward a world without prisons. This year, we're struck by a vision of a seed germinated by fire. It waits for the heat and smoke to indicate when the environment is cleared and suitable, to take its chance at life. In a hyper-civilized world that has attempted to eliminate fire in its quest for domination, we must set fire to the old and call forth a birth of new life. As the terror of this dominant order comes to new, or at least previously obscured heights, we are thinking about how to embolden new paths and relationships alongside terrain that has held potential and embodied revolt since its inception. Our paths will continue to demand experimentation, adaptability, ingenuity. May we be stoked by the dying off of old forces, and enlivened by our readiness for, and taking of, new ways of life!

There is a proud history of anarchists and other radicals meeting up in prison, and a history of them mentoring and teaching others. Black Liberation and adjacent struggles in the US created pockets of radicalization inside prisons, should they be captured, that lead to moments like the Attica Uprising in 1971. Transfers of the long-term recalcitrants lead to meetings of minds like when Sundiata Acoli, Joe Joe Bowen, Hanif Shabazz Bey, and Ray Luc Levasseur met in Marion, Illinois. Joe Joe, for one, continued teaching guerilla strategies long after. Long-term anarchist prisoners have been involved in hunger and work strikes in prisons the world over, notably including many of the Greek comrades, like Nikos Maziotis. The Chilean

anarchist, subversive, and Mapuche prisoners collectively pen statements for many days of action, not least of all Mónica Caballero, staying connected to struggles beyond the walls. They also inspire defiance outside of prison, as we see in many actions claimed in solidarity with the comrades aforementioned, and of recent significance: Alredo Cospito's 180-day hunger strike that, before ending last year, brought about so many incendiary actions. There have also been instances of elders and lifers taking responsibility for mass actions to try to shield others from additional time and consequences.

The state uses prisons to limit and contain rebellious individuals, revolutionary projects, and organizing on the outside. This can sometimes backfire, turning the prison into a hotbed of revolt and radicalization. To adapt to the revolutionary potential of prisoner organizing, modern prisons make use of several tools to control the movement of people, ideas, and skills in an attempt to quash potential revolt. These tools include surveillance – increasingly technological – of individuals, movement, and relationships, and stoking divisions among classes of prisoners, pitting them against each other. Direct physical violence and isolation are used even more liberally on the trouble-makers, advocates, and teachers. In addition to throwing some one in isolation, sometimes for decades, the system also transfers people away from their block, those they trust and organized with, or across the country from their family and supporters. The ongoing expansion of prison systems and facilities is necessary to be able to separate and distance us from each other. Whenever prisoners rise up, the state increases and adapts these measures, and innovates new ones, to prevent it from happening again. All of the barriers we currently face in staying connected and empowered are evidence of just how much the wardens and the managers have to be afraid of.

How, then, do we also adapt to the innovation of tools and techniques of control. First, we must seek to understand them. Often it is the long-term prisoners who can best observe, test, and articulate the behavior of the state, as they have seen it shift over time. This is just one of many reasons why we must actively facilitate their participation in anarchist spaces. So, for us, developing redundant and decentralized ways to stay in communication despite the surveillance and censorship is essential. This is required for us to build inside-outside organizing and collaborations between the imprisoned and the more-free. Correspondence also serves to remind captives that they are not forgotten and their captors that we are watching. Material support is also essential. Money for anarchist prisoners not only helps them get what they need from commissary, but can also flow to others who have less social support. Beyond commissary, funds can also be used in the prison economy to buy or create tools to maintain communication, or for protection from guard or fellow prisoner violence.

A project that expresses solidarity with joy in the game of life that above all makes us free ourselves, destroys alienation, exploitation, mental poverty, opening up infinite spaces devoted to experimentation and the continual activity of one's mind in a project aimed at realizing itself in insurrection.

"A project which is not specifically linked to the repression that has struck our comrades but which continues to evolve and make social tension grow, to the point of making it explode so strongly that the prison walls fall down by themselves.

"A project which is a point of reference and stimulus for the imprisoned comrades, who in turn are point of reference for it. Revolutionary solidarity is the secret that destroys all walls, expressing love and rage at the same time as one's own insurrection in the struggle against Capital and the State."

In other words, solidarity is not simply reactive, nor just a matter of directly supporting specific imprisoned comrades. It is a positive project to spread and deepen the revolutionary struggle outside the prisons in conjunction with those who are in prison, even when repression is strong enough to prevent communication.

Linking imprisoned comrades to a broader subversive project felt particularly apt in the case of long-term prisoners for two reasons. First, new connections seem vital to combating their drift into isolation over time: solidarity appears as "active remembering." Second, for comrades facing decades in prison with few remaining legal appeals, fighting for revolution and the literal destruction of the prisons is perhaps the most pragmatic path towards their release. Rather than conceiving of action and repression as separate moments, revolutionary solidarity suggests it is possible to treat repression as an opportunity to spread and deepen the broader struggle against the whole system. In turn, when anarchists spend time inside prison, it doesn't mean we are alone or that we have to wait for release to contribute to the struggle. Rather, even by simply maintaining a dignified, non-cooperative position relative to investigations, we demonstrate the possibility of defying the state.

4) Related to the above points, to develop an expansive approach to prisoner support, in which a constellation of groups, assemblies, and cells could contribute to solidarity with imprisoned anarchists using many different forms of struggle.

This meant finding ways to escape the model of isolated crews or committees of dedicated solidarity "specialists." It meant developing an experimental approach to action.

1) Address the specific problems of long-term prisoners by discussing how to approach prisoner support in new and more sustainable ways.

This included considering the most exhausting elements of support, and the intention to develop fresh strategies for fundraising, spreading information about imprisoned anarchists, and other basic tasks. To Libertarians, an open letter written in the late 1970s to support autonomous prisoners in the Spanish state, was an important reference point:

"The first point is to make the problem widely known; then, to keep it from being forgotten, by demonstrating, always more powerfully, a growing impatience. The means will multiply as the movement takes its course. In support of the prisoners, a single small factory in Spain might go out on strike for a day, and this would be a model for the rest of the country. You will only have to make immediately known their exemplary attitude, and half the battle is already won. Right away, one shouldn't be able to start a University course, a theatrical performance, or a scientific conference without someone directly intervening or letting loose a rain of tracts that pose the questions, What has become of our comrades? and, On what day will they finally be released? No one should be able to walk down any street in Spain without seeing the prisoners' names written on the walls. And the songs that are sung about them must be heard by all."

2) Take slow steps towards de-individualizing prisoner support in North America.

As more comrades entered prison, the model of "one support crew for one prisoner" seemed unrealistic, doomed to result in eventual isolation. This model also seemed to contribute to the depoliticization of cases, as it tended to emphasize particular aspects of individual situations rather than developing an analysis of shared context. Bringing together solidarity for Mason and McDavid was a small step out of this trap, allowing for more communication and coordination across collectives and distances. It was also a decision not simply to react to the state's indictments, which acknowledged no relationship between the defendants' cases, but to assert a new understanding of how we could struggle around both.

3) Take up the proposal of revolutionary solidarity more ambitiously, going beyond the particular solidarity action.

Daniela Carmignani's description of this principle was vital:

"Solidarity lies in action. Action that sinks its roots in one's own project that is carried on coherently and proudly too, especially in times when it might be dangerous even to express one's ideas publicly.

We must also build the capacity to act in solidarity and in response to what we learn from inside comrades, whether that be in the form of prison demos, phone zaps, destructive acts, and other things few of us have yet dreamt of.

When an anarchist goes to prison, they can serve as a point of connection between people inside and out. Our commitment to and style of doing prisoner support enables this connection to bear fruit, not only for individuals but also, in the best cases, to challenge the power of the state where it is most concentrated. There are many forms this role of anarchist and politicized prisoner can take. They can use their position, voice, and ability to have it amplified, to speak to larger issues. This informs outside comrades on the struggles of captive people. In the U.S., this has best been seen in Black Liberation struggles and overlap between the Black Panther Party and Black Liberation Army activity on the outside, and the uprisings in jails and prisons across the country. More recently, we've seen Eric King advocating for friends he made inside who helped him during some of his hardest times. We've also seen several people locked up in Atlanta jails for involvement in Stop Cop City and in Pennsylvania for alleged involvement in animal liberation use their media connections to describe conditions inside and to tell the stories of people they met inside. Most people in prison do not have anyone who can proliferate their words, whether through a blog, a zine, or graffiti. Anarchist spaces can and do just that. Michael Kimble is a great example of acting as a conduit between outside support and a captive queer population doing mutual aid on their own terms. Though they are still very precarious and under attack, Marius Mason has been able to strongly influence the treatment of and access for trans people in the federal prison system. In 2020, Jeremy Hammond recorded a video of himself and other captives expressing solidarity with Black Lives Matter protests in the streets. Malik Muhammad writes a column on his blog telling the stories of and doing interviews with people he's met in segregation. Through his connection to other anarchists, Michael Kimble shares radical Black history on his block during Black History Month and Black August. In these ways, anarchist prisoners tie inside struggle and radicalization to the larger movement outside.

The reverse is also true. By the nature of their position, anarchist prisoners strengthen the larger movement by informing its analysis, methods, and priorities. By their inclusion in the anarchist space, we demystify incarceration and teach each other best practices and survival techniques. This, in turn, empowers others to take necessary risks, knowing they are not alone. Our commitment to supporting our prisoners keeps us honest to our value of confronting state power even where it is most powerful. Maintaining relationships and facilitating the participation in movement space of people who are physically taken from us provides anarchists with a wing of

struggle that is "behind enemy lies." The power to incarcerate, to disappear, to silence, to steal comrades, family, and friends must be contested. And that contestation can only happen with other politicized and revolutionary prisoners. By meeting and struggling together in prison, it strengthens ties between criminalized people and the underclasses: an informal and irregular meeting of enemies of the state.

Our moves towards a life of freedom are undoubtedly shaped and strengthened by struggling alongside those captured by the state. The inventiveness and courage needed to maintain survival and one's values inside can teach us a great deal about what spirit will need to be mustered as we forge ahead. May this June 11th be a day to reflect on those we love inside, those we grow and struggle with that are locked away, and to make further moves against this world full of prisons and the forces that maintain it.

Prisoner Updates:

Marius Mason is now less than 2 years away from release! Despite the progress he has made for himself and other transgender prisoners, and due to anti-trans policies of the U.S. federal government, in March he was transferred back to a women's facility in Danbury, Connecticut. The state is also now requiring we deadname Marius in our correspondence. Michael Kimble was also recently transferred to another Alabama facility. He is still working on his resentencing and continues to participate in anarchist publishing. After going on hunger strike because of his property being taken and other harassment, Malik Muhammad was transferred to another facility in Oregon. At this facility, too, he has been targeted and thrown in seg, falsely accused of trying to organize a general strike. Sean Swain continues his collaboration with Final Straw radio. Comrade Z has also worked with Final Straw and written articles for Texas Observer Magazine. Xinachtli has a new fundraising campaign.

Internationally we celebrate that Claudio Lavazza was released from prison last year, after a lifetime in the anarchist struggle. We also note the continued fight of Alfredo Cospito, and now Francisco Solar (in Italy and Chile, respectively), against their particularly heinous conditions. Mónica Caballero continues to organize and speak out from inside the Chilean prisons, and we've recently seen some calls for financial support. New repression has also begun in Greece, after an untimely blast in Athens killed one comrade and injured another named Marianna. We stand with all those comrades charged after the explosion. Also, Nikos Maziotis' request for conditional release has been rejected by the Greek courts since he pronounced the obvious truth that "revolutionaries are not 'corrected' nor 'morally improved,'" so he is expected to

McDavid, who served many years in prison before his sentence was overturned. The Green Scare also included many of the classic petty gestures of repression: police harassment and surveillance, blacklists preventing employment, frivolous lawsuits and interventions in civil cases. For example, the harassment directed over many years against Marius Mason and his then-husband Frank Ambrose left the two of them nearly unemployable and surrounded by a trench of fear. Years later, some of Frank's former friends suggested that this was the aspect of the Green Scare that wore him down—particularly as others in the Midwest chose to distance themselves from those under the most intense pressure rather than take a stand against it. Ambrose ultimately chose to cooperate with the authorities, informing against Marius and many others.

As more and more anarchists and eco-saboteurs entered prison, most of them to serve shorter sentences, Luers remained on the support lists. There was the danger that his case would slowly be forgotten amid new raids and disasters, some of which also struck members of his support crew. In response, supporters began to think about the particular needs of long-term prisoners.

Through years of struggle and legal filings, Luers won a shortening of his sentence, leading to his release in December 2009. By this time, however, Marius Mason had been imprisoned for 18 months, having received a nearly identical sentence of 22 years after pleading guilty to two major arsons (against a GMO research facility and logging equipment) and acknowledging responsibility for more than a dozen other clandestine actions. Eric McDavid had already spent nearly half a decade behind bars.

In 2008, the long period of defeats and shrinkage that had followed the Green Scare gave way to a new wave of revolt. Yet these new strikes, movements, and insurrections could have caused supporters to forget about Mason and McDavid as new indictments and prison sentences were doled out. There was no guarantee that the thousands of new radicals who emerged out of movements like Occupy Wall Street would be able to recognize Mason, McDavid, or other long-term prisoners as comrades deserving of solidarity.

There was also the problem of slowly diminishing support crews. Only a few years into their imprisonments, solidarity efforts for Mason and McDavid were stagnating by 2011. In response, members of Mason's and McDavid's support crews and social circles came together in early 2011 to discuss coordination, hoping to launch a shared solidarity project.

To summarize some of the goals expressed in this meeting:

June 11: The History of a Day of Anarchist Prisoner Solidarity

Published by Crimethinc, June 2017

For 13 years, anarchists and environmentalists have observed June 11 as a day of action to mobilize around our imprisoned comrades. Over that time, the pace of revolt has quickened, with so many uprisings, clashes, and anarchist attacks that it is difficult to count all of them—not to mention all the indictments, raids, mass arrests, grand juries, and deaths. In this constantly shifting terrain, it's easy to lose track of the origins of our traditions. Our goal here is to trace a short history of June 11 as a small contribution to the global rhythm of revolt. At the end, we've included a timeline illustrating how many people around the world have contributed to the momentum around June 11. We hope to rescue these actions from oblivion, just as we work throughout each year to ensure that our imprisoned comrades will not be forgotten.

June 11 has been observed as a day of solidarity since 2004, when 27 cities hosted events to support Jeff "Free" Luers, an eco-anarchist in his fourth year of imprisonment for the burning of three SUVs in Eugene, Oregon. While a rich history of solidarity practices already existed in North America, those were focused on the Black Liberation and anti-imperialist movements1 and the hundreds of prisoners still held captive for decades. The capture of Luers and his co-defendant Craig "Critter" Marshall forced the radical environmental and anarchist movements to confront the question of repression in new ways after Luers was sentenced to 22 years and 8 months for an action that didn't hurt anyone. Despite FBI harassment of public educational events, the Break the Chains collective and Luers's support crew organized the solidarity day to mark the third anniversary of his arrest, inviting Ramona Africa to speak in Eugene as a step toward bridging the gap between different generations fighting repression. Ramona is a member of the MOVE family, a group of predominantly Black revolutionaries, who has been supporting her imprisoned comrades for 39 years.

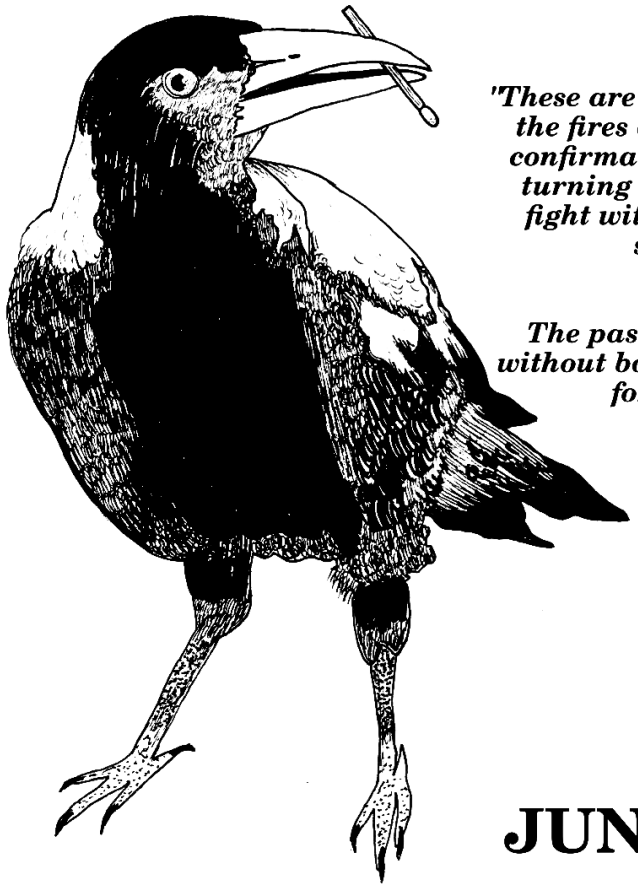
Luers's dignified position throughout his imprisonment and the ongoing fight to release him were vital reference points over the following years as repression intensified into what became known as the Green Scare. The Green Scare extended far beyond the series of cases directed against Earth Liberation Front groups. When Operation Backfire struck in December 2005, leading to the capture of many of the participants in a prolific ELF cell in the Pacific Northwest, it was also intended to sever the connections between eco-saboteurs and mainstream environmental groups, with the FBI aiming to punish many of the latter for their tacit support of radical action. Meanwhile, other FBI agents set out to entrap young people like Eric

serve his full sentence. Finally, we added two more anarchists to our list of long-term prisoners, as the Chilean state prepares to prosecute Aldo and Lucas Hernandez – each facing decades in prison, having been held in pretrial detention since December 2022. With each new and continued attempt by the states of the world to enforce obedience to their oppressive programs, we too recognize an urgent desire for their destruction.

AGAINST OBLIVION, AGAINST DESPAIR

JUNE 11TH

An International Day of Solidarity with Marius Mason and Long-term Anarchist Prisoners



'These are all images that stoke the fires of our passions, the confirmation that there is no turning back, that we must fight with every means, the same fight.

The passion for freedom is without borders; the same goes for solidarity."

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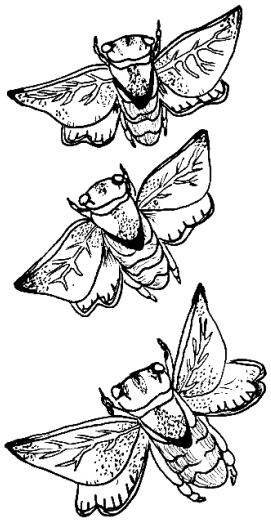


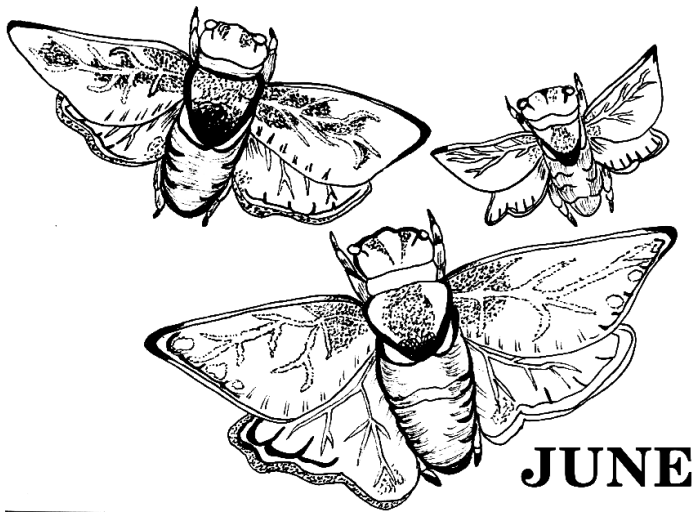
JUNE 11TH

An International Day of Solidarity with Marius Mason and Long-term Anarchist Prisoners

"Como la Cigarra"

"Nonetheless I'm still here
coming back to life...

...Singing to the sun
like the cicada does
after a year underground"



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